

State loan to cut septic system costs

By John Chaffee
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DUXBURY — The town will save about \$170,000 for the construction of two innovative septic disposal systems, thanks to a low-interest state loan.

For the owners of 14 other properties that will be connected to either the Snug Harbor or Bluefish River shared septic systems, it will mean a 25 percent reduction in what they might have paid in betterment fees.

Secretary of Environmental Affairs Trudy Coxe will be in Duxbury at 10 a.m. Monday to announce a low-interest loan for the two shared septic systems, currently under construction.

According to Robert Cady of the state Department of Environmental Protection, Duxbury will be able to borrow the \$679,541 for the two projects at half the interest rate available on the open market.

Duxbury

"It usually works out to be a 25 percent grant equivalent or one-half the interest," Cady said.

Under the state's Water Pollution Abatement Trust, the town will borrow construction funds at whatever rate is available and the state will buy back the loan at half the interest, Cady said.

According to Conservation Administrator Joe Grady, Duxbury was one of four Massachusetts communities to be awarded state assistance in the latest round of funding to help ease the effects of new Title 5 wastewater disposal regulations.

"We were the only one of the four to get full funding," Grady said.

Other communities receiving state help under the program are Cohasset, Quincy and Gloucester, Grady said.

The two Duxbury projects, which are being constructed under a combined contract, are considered models for the rest of the state, Cady said.

"I've referenced it to other towns," Cady said, including Falmouth and Kingston.

"It's been a good model," Cady said.

Both Duxbury projects are designed to solve pollution problems in Duxbury Bay.

The Snug Harbor project will link 11 business properties to a common sewer line and the effluent will be pumped to a leaching field at the nearby Duxbury yacht club golf course.

The Bluefish River project will connect three houses on either side of Washington Street at the river to a common sewer line that will pump the effluent to a leaching field at the nearby Ellison Center for the Arts, under construction at the former Holy Family Church property.

Both sites have been plagued for years by high water tables and failed septic systems that have leaked into the harbor.

Grady, who is the town's manager for the projects, said both are nearing completion and should be in operation by the end of July.

In addition to taking waste out of the two areas to new leaching fields, completion of the projects will have another benefit, Grady said: reopening shellfish beds that have been closed by the state because of pollution.

Commercial fisherman Bill Bennett, a member of the town's shellfish advisory committee, has estimated that \$244,000 worth of shellfish could be harvested every year from the area near the Washington Street bridge over the Bluefish River if pollution could be eliminated.

"We hope to have the shellfish beds open this fall," Grady said.